REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for examining the application. In response to the office action, Applicant has amended independent claims 14, 55, and 65. No new matter has been added to these amendments, and support for these amendments may be found throughout the specification. With the amendments, claim 4, 6, 8, 14, 16-38, 40-41, 43-45, 49, 55-57, 65-68, 71, and 78-93 are pending in this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

The Examiner rejected claims 14, 55, and 65 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5, 933,837 to Kung.

Applicant has recognized a barrier to effective information sharing in, e.g., large organizations. Such organizations possess large amounts of information, but the organization's members often find it hard to obtain desired information efficiently. Applicant recognized that information sharing can be greatly improved by providing a system that addresses two constituents of the barrier: first, that the user often does not know which data sources have the information that the user wants to access and, second, that the user frequently does not know how to ask the data source the appropriate question to acquire the information. Applicant's solution is to provide a common recipient, exemplified by the system server 14 of Fig. 2, to which queries requesting information may be submitted in a common form, such as a natural language. The common recipient keeps track of a number of disparate data sources that are available, exemplified by sources 20a-d, and sends the common-form query

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to those sources. Each source includes a respective dictionary for that source, for example dictionaries 18a-d. After receiving the common-form query, a dictionary translates the common-form query into a query that is customized for its data source. This process is repeated at each source that receives the common-form query. As Fig. 1 shows, each customized query 110 elicits customized results 112 from its respective data source. The respective dictionary for each data source then appropriately transforms the customized results into common results 108 for the user. In short, the user does not have to know the identities of the different data sources or the specific form of a query for any of the disparate data sources. Despite the Examiner's citation of Kung as disclosing Applicant's system, Kung does not disclose a system that enables a user to elicit information from disparate data sources without necessarily knowing of them or how to formulate queries for them.

Applicant's amended claim 14 requires, among other things, a query that elicits information from data sources be received, that customized query results be received from first and second data sources, where the customized query results indicate whether those data sources contain the elicited information, and that a common result package, indicative of the information that the customized query results contain, be provided. As the Examiner stated, in Kung a query manager 202 translates general "queries" into "queries" that disparate databases can recognize; see col. 5 lines 7-10. However, even though Kung refers to the translated material as "queries," Kung uses the term "queries" to mean something other than the common usage of "queries". The common usage is that a query specifies a criterion / criteria to be satisfied, which is how Applicant used the term "query" but not how Kung

used the term. In other words, a query elicits information from data sources as requested by

a user. Nothing in Kung describes any requested information being retrieved from data

sources and provided in response to what Kung refers to as a "query." This is to be ex-

pected, as the stated purpose of Kung is to synchronize replicated data across heterogeneous

databases, thus maintaining integrated data consistency across those databases; *see* col. 1

lines 7-10, col. 1 line 65 to col. 2 line 35, the Abstract, and the Title. The "queries" as dis-

closed by Kung seem to be used to fulfill this purpose by replicating, in those disparate da-

tabases, information that has been updated in a primary database; *see* col. 3 lines 46-52. As

the "queries" in Kung specify information to be inserted, not to be retrieved, the system dis-

closed in Kung does not address the problem that Applicant identifies or disclose Appli-

cant's solution to it. Thus, Kung does not disclose that a query that elicits information from

data sources be received, that customized query results be received from first and second

data sources, where the customized query results indicate whether those data sources contain

the elicited information, and that a common result package, indicative of the information

that the customized query results contain, be provided, as required by Applicant's amended

independent claim 14, and so Kung does not anticipate Applicant's amended independent

claim 14.

Applicant's amended independent claims 55 and 65 include limitations similar to

those of Applicant's amended independent claim 14. Thus, for the reasons discussed above,

Applicant's amended independent claims 55 and 65 are also not anticipated by Kung.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner next rejected Applicant's dependent claims 4, 16-38, 40, 49, 56, 66-68, and 78-93 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kung in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,601,026 to Appelt et al. The Examiner then rejected Applicant's dependent claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kung in view of Appelt et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,446,064 to Livowsky. The Examiner next rejected Applicant's dependent claims 8, 28, 57, and 71 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kung in view of Appelt et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,752,016 to Whittaker et al. Applicant's dependent claims 4, 6, 8, 16-38, 40-41, 43-45, 49, 56-57, 66-68, 71, and 78-93 each depend from one of Applicant's independent claims 14, 55, and 65. For the reasons discussed above, Applicant's independent claims 14, 55, and 65 are allowable because they are not disclosed by Kung and are not taught or suggested by Kung. Thus, Applicant's dependent claims 4, 6, 8, 16-38, 40-41, 43-45, 49, 56-57, 66-68, 71, and 78-93, which depend from allowable claims 14, 55, and 65, are also allowable.
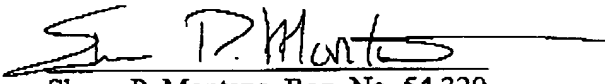
CONCLUSION

Applicant believes this Amendment and Response to be fully responsive to the present Office Action. Thus, based on the foregoing Remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant requests allowance of the application.

Applicant invites the Examiner to contact the Applicant's undersigned Attorney if

any issues are deemed to remain prior to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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